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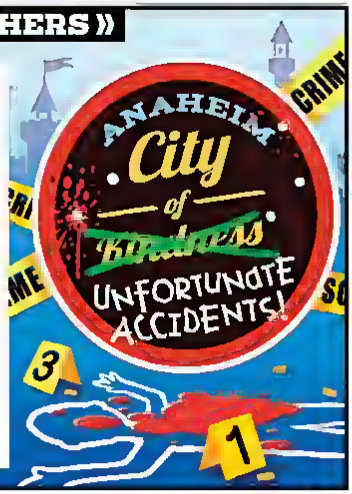
Photo by Bryan Sheehy
Design by Richie Backman

ORANGE FEATHERS »

Amongst the 60 largest cities in America, the ACLU rates Anaheim Police as being the 9th deadliest. The FBI's data backs up that claim Furthermore, the city has not reduced the death rate caused by a few trigger-happy cops. Anaheim's brand new **City of Kindness** seal is amended here to reflect the city's disregard for those killed



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RED MEAT
rainbow-flocked mandrill snatch
from the secret files of
Max Cannon
I bet I could prob'ly retire right now if I'd saved some of the money I earned over the last twenty-nine-and-a-half years
Maybe I should've got me one a them retirement plans or kept neither a little bit every week into some kind of savings
The smartest thing would've been if I'd of demanded a quarter every time a city bus driver told me to put my clothes back on

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Are You Moxley?

DA melts down at serial-killer press conference over mistaken identity

What if a California prosecutorial office were so incompetent it couldn't handle a simple courthouse press conference? Those of you who've followed Tony Rackauckas' Orange County district attorney's office (OCDA) know the question isn't rhetorical given its management's continual, remorseless ethical scandals that have harmed innocent citizens and handed outrageous perks to violent criminals. Earlier this year, the prosecutorial ageney, in league with Sandra Hutchens' sheriff's department, caused the loss of what should have been the easiest death-penalty case in Southern California history. But Rackauckas and his team seemed determined to end 2017 by squeezing in three final fiascos when they thought nobody was watching during the holidays.

»R. SCOTT MOXLEY

On Dec. 22, the DA and Susan Kang Schroeder, his unhinged media flack, threw prosecutor James Laird out to reporters in hopes he could successfully pretend their agreement to eventually release a cold-blooded serial killer back on the streets was a public service.

This is fiasco No. 1.

A bumbling, prevaricating Laird stood in front of journalists' microphones and became increasingly agitated that he was questioned at a press conference about why he was willing to free Oscar Moriel, the Mexican Mafia soldier turned snitch who admits he has killed at least "five or six" people and, thanks to Rackauckas, will never be held accountable for those deaths. Reporters legitimately wanted to know why prosecutors hadn't forced Moriel to provide details about his killings so that the families of the victims might find peace or clear inmates wrongly convicted of his murders, but Laird didn't know what to say other than it wasn't a big concern.

To their credit, reporters Lisa Bartley, Meghann Cuniff and Paul Anderson persisted while Laird somehow conjured up in his mind that I stood in front of him, silently mocking his absurd presentation after defining the Moriel scandal with a June 2016 cover story. "Who's this guy, Moxley, hack there?" the high-ranking prosecutor said in the middle of a question from Anderson.

Then Laird stormed over to the would-be Moxley. (Because I wasn't there, I had to email him later to ask if he'd planned to choke my neck, scream in my face or just chest bump me, but he hasn't mustered up a response.)

COURTESY KABC-7

Instead, Schroeder informed him as Laird approached the wrong person, "No, that's Paul Wilson." (You can see Laird's embarrassing meltdown at ocweekly.com.)

This is fiasco No. 2.

Incredibly, Laird didn't know who Wilson was, responding awkwardly, "Okay, and where are you?"

Wilson replied, "My wife was killed in the Dekraai murders."

Deservedly humiliated, Laird retreated. "Okay, okay," he said. "I just wanted to know why you were giving me such bad looks over there."

A horrified Wilson had watched first-hand for more than three years how cheating prosecutors and sheriff's deputies unnecessarily wrecked the Dekraai case, which stemmed from the largest mass killings in Orange County history, the 2011 Seal Beach salon massacre. So Wilson gave Laird his answer. "Well, I'm laughing at your speech you're giving," he said. "It's quite humorous."

Schooled, the prosecutor pretended to field other questions, but he was so unnerved by the botched Moxley assault that he absentmindedly abandoned Rackauckas' talking point and admitted police and deputies violated pretrial inmates' constitutional rights by employing jailhouse informants, such as Moriel, to win convictions.

Bartley then asked Laird "if the officers who are believed to have committed perjury [to cover up the snitch scam] should be prosecuted."

This is fiasco No. 3.

It was a fair question, but not to Schroeder, who stepped in front of Laird as he tried to answer, pushed Bartley's KABC microphone, twinkled her hand as if she were spreading fairy dust from a royal throne, smiled a smile that could have chilled Key West and barked, "Let's go" to an immediately subservient Laird.

Apparently under the delusion she hadn't already caused enough of a mess, Schroeder, who carries herself as a wealthy version of General Patton inside the OCDA and has spent years telling easily disproved lies for Rackauckas, turned back and walked up to Bartley, one of the state's best TV investigative journalists. "Lisa, I think, uh, I find you very rude and dishonest, so I want to not talk to you," she said in a syntax collision before throwing her hand up in the reporter's face. "Let's go."

Wilson later explained he'd walked away from the press conference once again amazed by the lack of DA professionalism. "I've had to watch all the lying and cheating by the DA and sheriff's department [in *Dekraai*]," he told the *Weekly*. "This was another spectacle. It's sad they think they are above the law and they can operate as they want to."

RSCOTTMOXLEY@OCWEEKLY.COM

POLITICAL FOOTBALL

» STEVE LOWERY

Carolina Panthers (11-5) vs. New Orleans Saints (11-5)

Carolina update: Panthers owner Jerry Richardson recently put the team up for sale after multiple stories came to light of his racist behavior and sexual misconduct. This included directing a racial epithet at an African-American scout—go ahead, guess which one—while also demanding that employees refer to him as "Mister," which in no way is a bad idea when your company represents both Carolinas, including the one that started the Civil War. Richardson also reportedly asked female employees to his stadium suite, then showed up in bare feet and requested they give him a foot massage. He enlisted the "seatbelt maneuver" as an excuse to brush his hand against their breasts and often asked women if he could personally shave their legs.

New Orleans update: You know, because New Orleans looks, tastes and sounds so different and wonderful, we tend to forget that the entire state of Louisiana is really fucked-up. As in kill-you-in-every-way-possible fucked-up. FUN FACT: Did you know that for 28 straight years, the state of Louisiana has had the highest murder rate in the country? *Who Dat? Dat Dead!* Twenty-eight straight years! That is commitment. You'd think they'd have a down year every now and then, when people get religion or Wal-Mart runs out of ammo. Nope. In fact, if the guns don't get you, the food will. Louisiana constantly ranks near the top of states with the most diabetes, which explains its recently reworked motto of "Louisiana: Die! Die! Die!"

Power game: Who said this? "*He thinks he's really great. You're supposed to reinforce that … even when he does things that make you feel like half a person.*" A) A Panthers employee about "Mister" Richardson, B) Attorney General Jeff Sessions about Donald Trump, or C) Unnamed Eastern European "matchmaker" to Melania Knavs regarding rich, American "Mister"?

Consensus: We'd rather get shot than touch Richardson's feet. Geaux Saints!

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Mail Order Snide

» MATT COKER

Dana Watch begins 2018 by cleaning out the mail bag, virtual and otherwise. What follows are the most recent favorites. Most came via email. The last one, which arrived in the mail de snail, was hand printed in pencil on yellow legal pad paper. Enjoy!

EMAILS

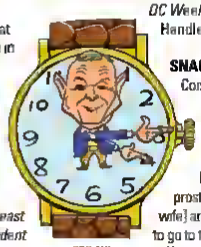
As a SEHB Peasant Taxpayer, what has DND (Do Nothing Dana) done in Congress for 25 years other than collect a paycheck paid by us, the taxpayers?

What legislation has DND introduced and had passed?

NOTHING

[He's] not called DND for NOTHING

—Milt Dardis, 40-year Southeast Huntington Beach resident



BOB AUL

For all of Dana's eccentricities, he's the one OC congressman to forcefully stand up for Californians' right to legal marijuana. Compare him to Senator Dianne Feinstein, who supports Attorney General Jeff Sessions' raids on CA pot dispensaries and has fought consistently against our rights as individuals and as a state to use and regulate marijuana.

Give Dana some credit—and find out if state Senator Kevin de Leon's going to make this an issue in his Senate campaign. I hope so!

—Chris Norby

So, according to YOU, the same guy who armed the Taliban (who fought against the Russians in the 1980s) is also Putin's reliable intelligence source?

Man, your so-called "column" is a total waste of space. Kill yourself. Even the racist Mexican was better than you.

—Hoyeru Zaharia

I just read your piece in the Dec. 15-21, 2017, *OC Weekly*. Dana has no balls. Chelsea Handler nailed it!

SNAIL MAIL

Comrade Matt Coker

Dana Watch fodder

I have assembled a dossier [sic] on Dana Rohrabacher you might be interested in.

I have proof that D.R. hired two prostitutes named [first name of Coker's wife] and [first name of Coker's daughter] to go to the Ali Baba Hotel in Costa Mesa. He want [sic] to watch the ladies defacte [sic] on the same bed that Gustavo Arellano fucked his mother in the *culo*.

It's only $9, better price than Hillary deal.

If interested, leave me in [sic] message in one of your many propaganda hateful articles.

—Comrade X

P.S. See you in the pigsty, comrade.

Matt Coker responds: *Get your facts straight, Comrade X. The Ali Baba is a motel, not a hotel. Just ask my earners, who'd best have daddy's money last he raise his pimp hand.*

GOT DANA WATCH FODDER?

Email mcoker@ocweekly.com

HeyYou!

» ANONYMOUS

Close Encounters of the Turd Kind

I'm the neighbor who dutifully picks up the shit my dog leaves on your lawns. If I notice poop from other dogs within arm's reach, I add that to my waste bag as well. YOU are the neighbors who allow your flea machines to crap all over my lawn without picking up after them. Unfortunately, I only see the outcome, not the actual depositing of said excrament. If I catch your canines in the act, I will secretly follow you to your homes, scooping up all the poop I encounter along the way, for the *Close Encounters*-style mountain of dog shit I will be leaving on your lawns.

BOB AUL

HEY, YOU! Send anonymous thanks, confessions or accusations—changing or deleting the names of the guilty and innocent—to "Hey, You!" c/o *OC Weekly*, 18475 Bandilier Circle, Fountain Valley, CA 92708, or email us at letters@ocweekly.com.

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FIGHTING BAD GUYS SINCE 1995

Special recognition for *OC Weekly* investigative journalist, R. Scott Moxley, from *New York Times Magazine* writers:

We also want to give a shout-out to an investigative writer whose work fell outside our narrative non-fiction mandate. **R. Scott Moxley of the *OC Weekly* has done a Herculean job breaking and following a scandal, involving jailhouse snitches and related allegations of corruption against the district attorney and sheriff's offices, which continue to unfold in Orange County.**

— *Emily Bazelon is a staff writer at* The New York Times Magazine *and the Truman Capote Fellow for Creative Writing and Law at Yale Law School.*

— *Pamela Colloff is a senior reporter at ProPublica and a writer-at-large at* The New York Times Magazine.

Bazelon and Colloff acknowledged Moxley in a newsletter for *In Justice Today* announcing their Favorite Criminal Justice Stories of 2017.

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BET IT ALL ON RAP

DESPITE YEARS OF BAD HANDS, PRODUCER DARREN VEGAS IS STILL IN THE GAME

BY FRANK JOHN TRISTAN

PHOTOS BY BRYAN SHEEHY

Imagine playing the same game of Texas HoldEm for almost 30 years, starting out with zero chips but with a mean poker face and the determination to walk away a high roller. Every time you start winning, you're dealt shitty cards or someone at the table starts cheating. Other times, a gangster robs all the players at gunpoint, and there's nothing you can do about it. Occasionally, the dealer drops dead, leaving you waiting until someone new takes their place. Do you think you could keep betting with a smile through all that?

This is the career of Darren Hubbard, a.k.a. Darren Vegas, a tall half-white, half-Mexican producer from Huntington Beach who cut his teeth in the music industry at a time when it could've literally left him bleeding to death in the street. Even though bad record deals and bloody murders closed doors for him several times, the 47-year-old isn't bitter over his losses. Today, he spends most of his time mentoring amateur artists at 17 Street Studios in HB.

Vegas—who adopted the name as an homage to his second love of playing poker in Sin City, as well as so people would remember it—followed the path of Dr. Dre, from working at Ruthless Records to holding the position as head producer for Death Row Records' second era, Tha Row. In its winter 2002 issue, *King* magazine recognized him as the hidden backbone of the music coming out on the label and dubbed him "the Invisible Man." He was also an architect behind two seminal '90s rap groups, Funkadelic Concepts and Killafornia Organization. His skills on the keyboard carved his place in the industry, relying on pure musicianship instead of sampling and creating his own melodies for his bass-heavy productions.

"He will go down in history to me as one of my top five," says Tha Chill from Compton's Most Wanted. "Especially after Killafornia, when he started doing his thing over at Death Row, to now doing his DJ stuff, dude is a real Orange County vet musician."

While on Tha Row, Vegas worked with LA-based KXNG Crooked (formerly known as Crooked I) and King Lil G (formerly known as Lil Gangster) before they earned their hip-hop crowns. "I met him back when he was on Death Row," Lil G says. "I'd say the reason my style is the way it is came from working with Vegas. Being around [him] drove me toward the right lane, and now we're out here making music videos, making records, making money."

Though Vegas will probably never get all the credit he deserves from stars who've launched their careers off his beats, his importance to the history of West Coast hip-hop shouldn't be overlooked.

While on *Sway's Universe* in September 2016, eccentric battle rapper Daylyt called out the man who helped him shape *The Black and White Project*, released earlier that year with HB rapper Mr. 2theP. "Big shouts out to my exclusive producer, which is Darren Vegas," he said. "I'm honored to be working with a man that has only worked with great people."

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

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BET IT ALL ON RAP

» FROM PAGE 9

"There's a couple of people that don't get the acknowledgement," Sway added. "People don't know of . . . the history, they don't know the legacy; [Vegas is] one of those people."

Born on Dec. 6, 1970, Vegas grew up just blocks away from the Pacific Ocean. A passion for music came to him at age 6, inspired by groups such as Kool & the Gang, Earth Wind & Fire, and the Whispers. At age 10, his parents bought him a Casio keyboard and piano lessons, he then learned to play drums in junior high. During high school, he fell in love with rap music after hearing artists such as Run D.M.C. and N.W.A, and he began to DJ parties at 15 while creating his first instrumentals by layering tracks on a boombox. His talent for golf at Edison High School almost made him pursue a career in sports, but his obsession with making beats ultimately won out.

"It was a new form of expression," Vegas says. "I got made fun of sometimes; [other kids] were like, 'Dude, what are you trying to be, a black guy or something?' It was different then because nobody in Orange County was doing hip-hop."

He enrolled in the music program at Orange Coast College, where he met now-legendary DJ/producer J Roc in 1990. They became instant friends, deejaying and collaborating after Vegas saved up money to buy his first keyboard sampler, an Esoniq EPS. They brought on local MCs Boodro and Pranksta to form the group Fonkadelic Concepts, with the goal of representing the county.

At the time, renowned musician Melvin Lee Davis was dating Boodro's sister, and he took the group under his wing after hearing "amazing talent," becoming an early mentor for Vegas. "Darren was crazy dedicated . . . to making beats," Davis says. "You sort of have to be dedicated to it if you want anything to go down of any significance. Someone gave him the keys to the door; he opened it, and they saw he had the skills."

After turning down a deal with *Soul Train* creator Don Cornelius, the group released the record *O.C. Bound* in 1993 with funding from Davis and Vegas' friend Mark Carranza. The project is a perfect blend of early gangster rap, R&B, and breakbeats, with a standout title track. It starts with a slowed techno sample leading you into a bass-heavy rhythm that slams down like a lowrider's tires hitting the street and a loop of someone saying "Orange County" right before the gangster-rap rhymes begin styling over the beat. Fonkadelic Concepts truly represented where they were from at a time when other artists in the county were claiming Compton. Vegas remembers people loving the record when it dropped, especially Mexicans cruising on Bristol Street in Santa Ana.

Fonkadelic Concepts dissolved over time, and Vegas went back to school, earning an AA in music business in 1993. He then began putting all his time into honing his production skills. In 1995, he started working with underground groups while attending Cal State Dominguez Hills. Vegas' big break came when his roommate Uni and producer Dave Knight helped to set up a meeting with Big C-Style (of D.P.G.C.) and Tha Chill. "I was like, 'Damn, these beats are dope as hell,'" Big C-Style recalls. "I said, 'We can do something with this,' and I immediately put some artists on top of it."

Tha Chill says he's never met a white guy who had so much soul while playing piano. "He could mimic any record vs. sampling," he says. "I could hum a melody to Darren, and he could just play it."

Big C-Style took the beats to Death Row Records, and a hard-hitting, melodic instrumental Vegas made with Knight ended up being used for LBC Crew's song "Drippin In My Low Low" and Snoop Dogg's interlude "Traffic Jam" on *Tha Doggfather*. The D.P.G.C. co-founder remembers Vegas meeting with Snoop Dogg and Dr. Dre at Can-Am studios in Tarzana in 1995, the Death Row artists thought Vegas was way ahead of his time. Jai Hassan-Jamal "Big Jake" Robles soon reached out to Vegas about signing him to the label, but Robles was shot outside an Atlanta nightclub on Sept. 23, 1995, before they could finalize a deal. He died a few weeks later.

Vegas' luck changed right before the summer of 1996, when the broke producer received a $10,000 check for his contribution to Snoop Dogg's "Traffic Jam."

"I had made the fucking beat in my boy's garage when his mom was in there doing the laundry," Vegas says. "You have to understand, I was a white kid making fucking rap music. People are like, 'What the fuck are you doing, dude? You're not going to ever make it doing that shit,' so that [recognition] kind of validated me."

He decided to drop out of school to focus on producing Killafornia Organization, a collaboration between veteran rappers including Compton's Most Wanted, South Central Cartel and Tray Dee and some fresh artists out of Orange County. The producer worked on the beats for the album as a part of Three Strikes Productions, with Vegas advancing his style to create pure G-Funk melodies and Tha Chill crediting Vegas for teaching him "the flyness of music." The group expected a big payday when the record dropped on Aug. 27, 1996, but they say they never saw a dollar because of a bad deal with the now-bankrupt Raging Bull Records.

Vegas then quit the music business out of anger until 1999, when, he says, "I did these fucking beats, and I said, 'This sounds like something Bone Thugs-N-Harmony would sound good on,' but I didn't even know them."

However, Vegas did know legendary Samoan rap group Boo-Yaa T.R.I.B.E., and they connected the producer with the hip-hop group. He remembers playing a vicious instrumental for the Cleveland MCs that particularly excited them. "They were in the kitchen, dude, and for some reason, they started throwing chairs because they were so hyped," Vegas says. "[They were] rapping in my face, and Bizzy jumped on top of the table."

The resulting collaboration, "Righteous Ones," landed *on* the group's *BTNHResurrection* album along with another Vegas-produced song, "One Night Stand." The album peaked at No. 2 on the Billboard 200, reached No. 1 on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums by March 18, 2000, and is now certified platinum. This led to Vegas working on Mo Thugs Family album *Mo Thugs III: The Mothership* (2000), then Layzie Bone's solo album *Thug By Nature* (2001) and Bizzy Bone's *The Gift* (2001). Vegas remembers Layzie would get so pumped up in the studio that he'd take his shirt off when he'd jump on the mic, as though he were preparing to fight.

"Righteous Ones" got a second life in 2013 when Mac Miller and the Alchemist sampled the beat for Prodigy's "Confessions of a Cash Register" on the *R.I.P. I-3* mixtape.

He started producing for Long Beach rapper Crooked I in 1999 while the MC was signed on Death Row Records. They created his still-unreleased album *Untouchable*, which caught the attention of the label, so Reggie Wright (who ran Death Row while Suge Knight was in prison) arranged for Vegas to fly up to Mule Creek State Prison in late 2000. "[Knight] was like, 'Look, I've heard all this shit you've been doing, man, and I want you to sign with me,'" Vegas recalls. "'I listen to your music, everybody's been talking in the streets. . . . You're going to be the biggest record producer in the world.'"

They wrote out a deal on a napkin, and Vegas says Knight agreed to pay him $50,000 to do two remix albums, Tupac Shakur's *Until the End of Time* and Dogg Pound's *2002*. Vegas linked up with G-funk creator Cold 187um, a.k.a. Big Hutch, to work on the records and brought Monsta O onto the label to help with production. Vegas was given a

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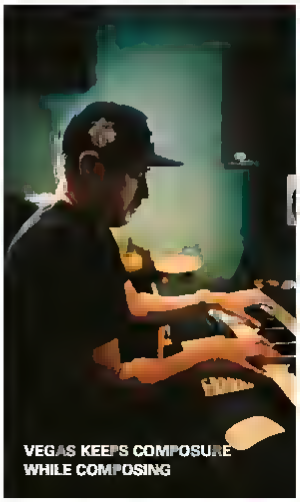

VEGAS KEEPS COMPOSURE WHILE COMPOSING

BET IT ALL ON RAP

» FROM PAGE 11

$10,000-per-month salary and worked 12-hour days six days a week at Can-Am Studios. "We had a chemistry going when we'd create stuff and collaborate on beats," Monsta O says. "[Vegas and I] were all about trying to stay away from sampling because we're real players."

Tha Dogg Pound's *2002* contained a few tracks Vegas worked on with Big Hutch, former Death Row rapper and former CEO of G-Unit West.

"He was incredible, I thought he was very talented, a master at what he did," former Death Row rapper Eastwood says. "He gave us a sound that was up-to-date as well as familiar with the authentic Death Row sound. . . . I just thought he was talented the way he bridged the gap between old and new."

Vegas got to see the star power in Keyshia Cole with her cracking high notes and raw, shining potential in the studio. Ray J

BOW DOWN TO THA ROW

most notably "Smoke" and "What Cha About." As a longtime fan of Shakur, Vegas was honored to work on the rap legend's posthumous 2001 album *Until the End of Time*, creating beats for his vocals. Vegas did the tracks "Why U Turn on Me" and "Happy Home", the beat for the latter captured the emotion of the song. Vegas and Monsta O remember meeting Shakur's brother at a party after the album dropped, Mopreme Shakur told them he loved the record. By April 14, 2001, *Until the End of Time* was No. 1 on Billboard's Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums, No. 1 on the Billboard 200 and certified four times platinum.

After Cold187um left Death Row in 2002, Vegas took over as head producer, becoming a "beat-making mothafucka" working with any artist who walked in the door; he had huge budgets and access to any equipment he needed. Knight would constantly pop into the studio to test his producers, requiring every track to have a West Coast gangsta feel. They'd know Knight loved the music when he'd spark up a cigar and relax.

Vegas took his position as both a challenge and with a determination to make his mark. "Darren Vegas was the first time I realized it wasn't only blacks making those hard-ass hip-hop and R&B tracks," says Spider Loc, a former Death Row rapper and former CEO of G-Unit West.

"He was incredible, I thought he was very talented, a master at what he did," former Death Row rapper Eastwood says. "He gave us a sound that was up-to-date as well as familiar with the authentic Death Row sound. . . . I just thought he was talented the way he bridged the gap between old and new."

Vegas got to see the star power in Keyshia Cole with her cracking high notes and raw, shining potential in the studio. Ray J could get in the booth and think of hooks just as fast as a rapper could think of verses. Vegas brought Latino artists to Tha Row, encouraging Lil G to craft a smooth rap style for women on the song "Sending This Message." Left Eye would come into the studio, light candles everywhere and keep very few people in the room while she recorded her N.I.N.A. project before her death in April 2002. When Kurupt returned to the label, Vegas produced the song "I'm Back (Remix)," on which Kurupt raps, "I'm in Vegas with Vegas, motherfucker, gangstaz smashing through Vegas motherfuckers."

For the soundtrack to Eddie Griffin's documentary *Dysfunktional Family*, Vegas brought in every artist he had at the time. Tha Row came decided to also make a compilation album, almost as a sampler of all the music they were making for the film that wasn't being released. "It was a great album," Griffin says. "It should have been promoted."

While at Tha Row, Vegas produced some of his best work with Crooked I. The two were dedicated to being the best they could be, complementing each other on every track. In 2003, they released *Westcoastanosta Vol. 1*, 17 minutes of gangster rap guaranteed to give you a stank

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

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BET IT ALL ON RAP

» FROM PAGE 12

face from just how raw every song is as you bob your head. Vegas is confident if *Untouchable* had dropped when it was supposed to, he and Crooked I would've been the biggest artists in the rap game. "I really ain't ever heard Crooked I make another doper record than that one him and Darren did," says Big C-Style.

But being with The Row was not only frustrating; it was also dangerous. Two of Knight's associates were killed in 2002. Vegas says he lifted weights every day in case he had to fight in the studio or over his chain in the street. And he had to go along with Knight's wishes for Vegas to produce the Tupac remix record *Nu-Mixx Klazzics* while sitting on far more superior albums.

Vegas decided to leave the label in the beginning of 2004, as it was obvious the label was dying a slow death. "The records weren't coming out," he says. "[Suge] stopped paying me; he went back to prison one time, and I remember he called me from prison saying, 'I want you to go do this record,' and I said, 'Dude, you haven't paid me in like 3 months.' He's like, 'Pay you? You owe me money, motherfucker.'"

The producer says thousands of beats and hundreds of tracks he worked on there may never see the light of day. And despite being ahead of their time, releases such as Crooked I's *Hood Star* or Kurupt's *Down and Dirty* didn't get the pushes they deserved. According to Vegas, he doesn't receive royalties for any of the records he produced for the label. (Entertainment One, which now owns the rights to the Death Row and Tha Row catalogs, did not respond to requests for comment for this story.)

Vegas found himself blackballed in the industry. No label wanted to deal with a producer still under contract with Knight, so any production work he did during these years stayed underground. When his contract with Tha Row expired in 2010, Vegas was determined to find the biggest artists he could while reinventing himself as an independent producer. He teamed back up with King Lil G for the mixtape *Sucios Pt 2* in 2011 and with 40 Glocc for a remix for the song "Welcome to California," which featured verses by West Coast artists Snoop Dogg, E-40, Xzibit, Too Short and Sevin.

He then took a break from hip-hop to return to his roots, becoming a DJ performing at clubs and making EDM-inspired tracks.

Then in 2016, Vegas teamed up with infamous battle rapper Daylyt and Mr. 2theP on *Friday the 25th, The Black and White Project*, and a yet-to-be released record. He's still searching for the right artist or deal to return him to his former glory, he says.

A major investment loss into real estate during the Great Recession forced Vegas to confront all his frustrations over his losses in the industry, with him choosing to let go of it all so he could finally live his life. He's happier now, raising two sons with his wife of four years.

All Vegas needs now is the right star to work with, but more important is to find companies willing to financially back records because without the money, a project will go nowhere. Vegas is currently in talks with a major artist about a project that he says will require fresh talent, but they must believe they have the skills and a desire to learn from a producer who's worked with the West Coast's finest. "You may have great talent, but if you don't get with the right trainer, someone who is going to help bring that out of you and help show you the way, then you may never reach your full potential," Vegas says. "I'm not just a guy who makes beats, I'm the guy that will teach you the fucking game."

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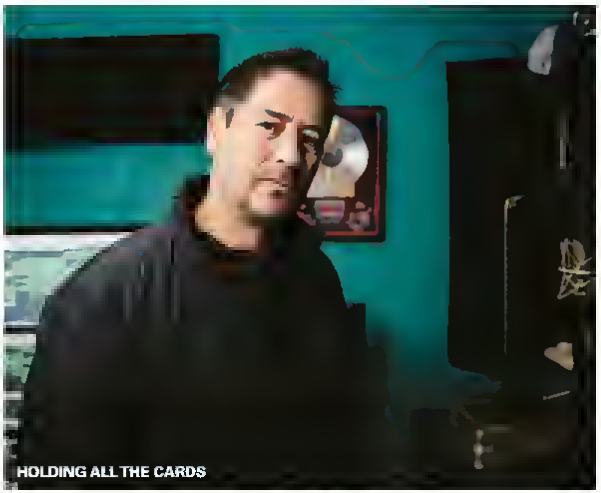
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COURTESY OF FELD ENTERTAINMENT

fri/01/05

[COMEDY]

NEVER NORMAL
Norm Macdonald

Dry wit doesn't describe it correctly, and "blunt" implies he's just letting the hammer fall, instead of deciding exactly how and where to land the impact. Norm Macdonald is a comedian of a certain style. He tweeted and deleted a story about meeting Bob Dylan once: "When Bob Dylan speaks, his words seem chosen long ago, his sentences are spare, and he looks right at you, and his countenance is stone." And that's not a wrong way to think about Macdonald, who loves to look right at you while he's choosing his words. It's comedy that makes the unnatural seem natural, or maybe it's the other way around. As The Onion said of his recent *Based On a True Story*, "[It's] a book that both isn't a celebrity memoir and is, arguably, the best celebrity memoir ever written." In other words, this guy can do it all.

Norm Macdonald at Irvine Improv, 527 Spectrum Center Dr., Irvine, (949) 854-5455; irvineimprov.com. 7:30 & 9:45 p.m., also Sat. $25. 21+. —CHRIS ZIEGLER

[CONCERT]

Still Standing
T.S.O.L.

It's hard—if not impossible—to overlook the fact Long Beach punk icons T.S.O.L. are turning 40 in 2018. Despite a lineup that's changed more than a few times and added and subtracted members at a dizzying pace, the band's constant pivoting and changing of sound have prolonged their longevity. This constant change has helped their legacy and allowed fans of various ages and generations to engage with their different periods. Last January, the group released *The Trigger Complex*, their first in eight years, and Jack Grisham, Ron Emory and crew sound as energized as they did as youths. This Observatory show will be their second of the year, and if their list of scheduled shows is an indication of what's to come, T.S.O.L. will continue blazing in the new year.

T.S.O.L. with Lower Class Brats, JFA, Narcoleptic Youth and Ukulele Hiro at the Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com. 7:30 p.m. $18. —DANIEL KOHN

sat/01/06

[FAMILY EVENTS]

PARTY LIKE A KING
Dia de los Reyes

In Mexican culture, Dia de los Reyes—also known as Three Kings Day—is on Jan. 6 to honor the Three Wise Men who delivered gifts of frankincense, myrrh and gold to baby Jesus Christ. Come to Segerstrom Center for the Arts on the new Argyros Plaza to celebrate this rich cultural tradition with lively music, a community procession, *rosca de reyes* (kings' cake) and storytelling—all the usual fun and games one does on this holiday. Enjoy craft-making, sample delicious food from trucks and be sure to get your picture snapped at the photo booth. Dia de los Reyes is sure to be a holy good time for the whole family!

Dia de los Reyes at Segerstrom Center for the Arts' Argyros Plaza, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 556-2787, www.scfta.org. 11 a.m. Free. —CYNTHIA REROLLEDO

[SPORTS]

Hello, Moto
AMA Supercross

If your 2018 New Year's resolution involved watching more dudes ride motorcycles through dirt obstacle courses, well, you're in luck. January marks the start of AMA Supercross racing season, more specifically, this is Anaheim 1, the first races of the year. And this annual opener happens right here in OC at Angel Stadium. Show time is at 6:30 p.m., but qualifying starts at noon—meaning you can get six-plus hours of pregaming in at the Pit Party, a fandom festival of all things Supercross. Bonus: Bring an empty can of Monster for free Pit Party entry (with valid event ticket).

MORE » ONLINE
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AMA Supercross at Angel Stadium, 2000 E. Gene Autry Way, Anaheim, (714) 940-2000, www.supercrosslive.com. $43-$110. —ERIN DEWITT

sun/01/07

[SCREENING]

Show-Biz Memories

Follies

One of Stephen Sondheim's lesser known but equally magnificent musicals comes to the National Theatre stage for the first time. Originally produced in 1971, *Follies* takes place on the stage of the decaying Weismann Theatre, where former showgirls and performers during the two World Wars reunite after nearly 30 years. In between reminiscing about the good ol' days and lying about how good they have it now, each person's youth comes alive in a ghostly version of themselves and performs stellar dance numbers to convey their memories and subconscious desires. See this decadent show about nostalgia and show-biz life, unmissable for every fan of Sondheim's and of live theater.

NTL Screening: *Follies* at Irvine Barclay Theatre, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine, (949) 854-4646, www.thebarclay.org. 2 p.m. $17-$22. —AIMEE MURILLO

[HEALTH & FITNESS]

Open Your Mind

Yoga In the Park

The holiday season is rough. If you are blessed enough to not work in retail or one of Amazon's fulfillment centers, you might get some well-earned time off—but that would mean awkward conversations with the family about your past failures, admonitions to read the Book of Acts, passive-aggressive remarks, et al. But hey, relief is in sight! Regain your peace of mind doing Yoga In the Park, courtesy of Fitology. Vinyasa, or flow yoga, starts not too bright and early at Craig Regional Park in Fullerton, so wake up, swap your pjs for yoga pants, and get your downward-facing dog pose in action.

Yoga In the Park at Craig Regional Park, 3300 State College Blvd., Fullerton; www.fitology.com/book-online/yoga. 10 a.m. $10. —HEATHER MCCOY

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JAN 12
MICHAEL BOLTON
JAN 19
GARY ALLAN
JAN 20
ADAM SANDLER
JAN 26
JAN 27 THE TEMPTATIONS & THE FOUR TOPS
FEB 3 NELLY
FEB 9 A NIGHT WITH JANIS JOPLIN
FEB 10 CHARLIE WILSON
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mon/01/08

[EXHIBITS]

Beyond the Z-Boys

'Surf 2 Skate'

If you haven't seen the "Surf 2 Skate" exhibit yet, it's not too late! This exquisite survey takes the beginnings of skate culture from the 1960s and '70s and demonstrates how they're linked to the heyday of surfing culture. Through historical photos, classic boards (of both the water and asphalt variety), some never-before-seen art by Rick Griffin, and other ephemera collected from the archives of nearly 30 artists and enthusiasts—including *Juice Magazine*, CR Stecyk, Patti McGee, Ron Church, Todd Huber, Alva SurfCraft and more—"Surf 2 Skate" expands on our knowledge of both worlds and how they've shaped Southern California's culture.

"Surf 2 Skate" at Surfing Heritage & Culture Center, 110 Calle Iglesias, San Clemente, (949) 388-0313, www.surfingheritage.org. 11 a.m. Through Jan. 21. $5 suggested donation. —AIMEE MURILLO

tue/01/09

[TRIVIA]

Know Your Bard

Shakespeare Trivia Night

So you think you're a worthy bard? Maybe remember a Shakespeare quote or two from high school? Seen a film about Shakespeare that may have had an actual Shakespearean quote in it? Or you just like to drink? Then you are welcome to attend Shakespeare Trivia Night at Chapter One: the modern local. Feel free to imbibe some local, ecologically sound cuisine and/or get to guzzling drinks imported from around the world while you or your group of contenders compete in this themed trivia night, co-hosted by South Coast Repertory.

Shakespeare Trivia Night at Chapter One: the modern local, 227 N. Broadway, Santa Ana, (714) 352-2225, www.chapteronetml.com. 7 p.m. Free. —SCOTT EEINSLATT

wed/01/10

[FILM]

LEATHER MAN
Tom of Finland

Finland's most successful director, Dome Karukoski brings the compelling story of artist Touko Laaksonen to the screen in this important look at one of the gay community's iconic figures. A decorated officer who returned home after serving in World War II, Laaksonen found peacetime in Helsinki a nightmare, with rampant persecution of gays and their being pressured to marry women and have children. Finding refuge in his art, Laaksonen became a leading figure in the gay "deviant" art movement, and his drawings of muscular men free of inhibitions helped ignite the flames of the gay revolution.

Tom of Finland at ArtTheatre, 2025 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, (562) 439-5436, www.arttheatrelongbeach.com. 7 p.m. $11.50. —SR DAVIES

[ART]

Get Sketchy
The Drunken Quill Society

Drink-and-draw events are a dime a dozen in Orange County, but we bet none are as fancy-schmancy as Matador Cantina's Drunken Quill Society. Every month, illustrators of all skill levels congregate in downtown Fullerton to sketch together in an environment of creativity and collaboration (and—let's be real—to show off their skills to everyone else). This month's theme is simply to start up the new year with more art in your life, so come down and sketch while mixologist Taylor pours some stiff drinks and DJ Craque gets your creative juices flowing with some tunes. Bring your sketchbooks, pens, quills and whatever else you need to make your drunken masterpiece.

The Drunken Quill Society at Matador Cantina, 111 N. Harbor Blvd., Fullerton, (714) 871-8226, www.facebook.com/thedrunkenquill. 7 p.m. Free. 21+. —AIMEE MURILLO

thu/01/11

[LECTURES]

Locavoracious
'Wild Natives & Refined Veggies'

The recently opened 1888 Center in Old Towne Orange is a clean, well-lighted local place for books, coffee, art, literary camaraderie, and thoughtful readings and talks, and this week, it welcomes Thea Gavin, local barefoot wildlands wanderer and eco-booster, teacher, outdoors photographer and blogger. Offering a workshop in 1888's Visual Storytelling Series, she'll ruminate, cogitate and help you facilitate native-plant habitat restoration and community food gardening. Gavin's talk, "Wild Natives & Refined Veggies," is co-sponsored by local nonprofit Orange Home Grown, which promotes "hands on" learning and activism and runs the local Saturday farmers' market.

"Wild Natives & Refined Veggies" with Thea Gavin at 1888 Center, 115 N. Orange St., Orange, (657) 282-0483, 1888.center 7 p.m. $5. —ANDREW TONKOVICH

[CONCERT]

STRING AWAKENING
Michi Wiancko

Besides being a talented violinist, the incredibly prolific Michi Wiancko has composed a number of pieces for multi-instrumental groups and is a member of East Coast Chamber Orchestra. She has released numerous albums of not only her own solo violin pieces, but also collaborations with Alice Lin. The Juilliard alum and San Clemente native will be performing a range of songs using violin, loop machine and her own vocals to reflect her eclectic taste in various genres from folk to electronica. Inspired by the Casa Romantica space, Wiancko will also completely improvise one work live. Don't miss this rousing musical experience!

Michi Wiancko at Casa Romantica 415 Avenida Granada, San Clemente, (949) 496-2139, www.casaromantica.org. 7 p.m. $20-$25. —AIMEE MURILLO

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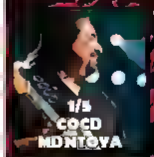

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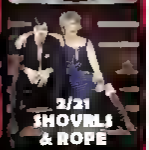
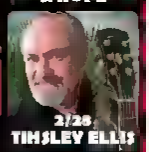
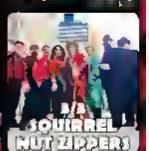
1/6	PDHCHD SANCHEZ
1/7	DDUG STARKS PRESENTS CDMEDY
1/11	THE SUBDUDES
1/12	TOMMY CASTRD AHD THE PAIHKILLERS
1/13	DESPERADO (EAGLES TRIRUTE)
1/14	KRIS KRISTDFFERSON
1/15	LITTLE RIVER BAND
1/20	GUITAR LEGEHD DICK DALE
1/21	HERMAN'S HERMITS STARRIHG PETER NDDNE
1/23	MICHAEL HESMITH & FIRST NATIONAL BAND
1/24	JDHN HIATT & THE GOHERS, FEATURIHG SDHHY LANDRETH
1/25	DAVID WILCOX
1/26	JEFFERSON STARSHIP
1/27	LDS RIDS RDCK SCHDOL
1/28	PAUL BARRERE & FRED TACKETT
2/2	HDWARD JDHES SOLO
2/3	THE ENGLISH BEAT
2/5	MAX WEIHBERG'S JUKEBDX
2/9	LDS RIDS ROCK SCHDOL
2/10	THE MUSICAL BDX
2/11	SIDE DEAL (MEMBERS OF TRAIH, SUGAR RAY, & PAWHSHDP KIHGS) FEAT. SRUHK BAXTER
2/14	OTTMAR LIEBERT & LUHA HEGRA
2/15	THE VERY BEST OF DAVE MASDH
2/15	THE 5TH DIMEHSIDH
2/17	THE DAH BAHD
2/21	SHDVELS & ROPE
2/23	AMBRDSIA
2/24	MARC SEAL
2/25	ATLAHTA RHYTHM SECTIDH







UPCOMING SHOWS

2/28	TIHSLEY ELLIS	3/24	CARL PALMER'S ELP LEGACY
3/2	KEHHY WAYHE SHEPHERD BAHD	3/25	MARTIH SEXTOH
3/3	SQUIRREL HUT ZIPPERS	4/4	ARLD GUTHRIE
3/4	KEIKO MATSUI	4/14	MELISSA MANCHESTER
3/6	KEHHY WAYHE SHEPHERD BAHD	4/15	LOS LDHELY BDYS
3/9	GARY PUCKETT & THE UHIDH GAP	4/19	URIAH HEEP
3/10	WALTER TRDUT	4/20	DIXIE DREGS
3/15	STEVE TYRELL	4/21	Y&T
3/17	ST. PATRICK'S DAY WITH THE FEHIAHS	4/22	WISHBDHE ASH
3/18	JIM MESSIHA	4/27	HAL KETCHUM
3/23	BEATLES vs STOHES - A MUSICAL SHOWDOWH	5/8	MADELEINE PEYRDUX
		5/15	BLDD, SWEAT & TEARS
		6/7	ULI JDH ROTH

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Bulgo-girls

Hanki Everyday Korean serves up casual Korean meals with a dose of girl-group K-pop

BY EDWIN GOEI

KOREAN CUISINE FOR THE HANKI SET

EDWIN GOEI

Contrary to its name, Hanki Everyday Korean is not something you see every day. It's nothing like any restaurant I've seen before, at least in Orange County. There's a branch of it in Brooklyn, New York, tucked between a falafel stand and a hot chocolate joint. In a lot of ways, the Hanki in Huntington Beach is just like that one in Brooklyn, as it's located beneath apartments in one of those newfangled mixed-use developments that aim to make Orange County a little more like New York.

But the concept itself is harder to classify. I'm not exactly sure where it fits in the spectrum. The presence of bulgogi and dak galbi-topped hot dogs might suggest it's a fusion fast casual or even a fast-food joint. But it's neither of those. Everything, even the hot dog, is prepared to order on stoves in sizzling pans, taking several minutes to cook.

Yet Hanki is not like the mom-and-pops found in Garden Grove's Korean District either. You pay up front on a touch-screen tablet. Also different is the constant rotation of female K-pop music videos projected on the wall. About three songs cycled through as I waited for my food. Or at least I think it was three songs. Since the videos look and sound the same, I'm not positive if I watched three separate segments or just one long one with costume changes in between. For sure, it's always a girl group, all doe-eyed and gyrating sensually in barely there outfits that make Britney Spears' schoolgirl phase look innocent and quaint.

I point this out because it's in sharp contrast to the trio of men who work behind the counter. One of them appeared to be a curmudgeonly grandfather. The restaurant seems a family-run affair despite the slick corporate logo and interior design. And as soon as I ordered, everyone went into action. The older gentleman took a container of batter out from the fridge and proceeded to ladle it into a frying pan equipped with three circular molds not unlike the kind McDonald's employs for its fried eggs. Moments later, the pancakes were delivered to my table by the youngest member of the family.

Thin as latkes, they were as bright orange as prison jump suits, but with the edges browned to a crisp. As I tore into them, I found the interiors still hot, tender and latticed together by a patchwork of chopped kimchi and veins of scallions. A soy-based dipping sauce came on the side, but it wasn't there to add flavor; rather, it was to temper the spiciness and tartness of the pancakes. These are kimchijeon, after all, and they taste best when the kimchi used is at its ripest.

The pancakes were from a section of the menu that, for some reason, is dubbed "Quick Eats." This distinguishes the rice bowls from the Hanki Set list, which is a roster of bento-like meals. All the proteins that appear both in the Hanki Sets and Quick Eats menu are cooked the same way in a hot pan. Only after I ordered did the raw bulgogi, spicy pork and spicy chicken get tossed in a deep-bottomed skillet over fire. And since the kitchen is directly behind the cash register and open to the dining room, it filled the restaurant with the same familiar and intoxicating smells of a traditional Korean barbecue.

As I sat there, taking in the aromas, listening to my miso pork hiss in the pan, I began to salivate. This, I thought, was refreshing. Finally, here's a contemporary Korean joint that's obviously trying to appeal to millennials but doesn't resort to the panacea of the Chipotle assembly line.

This isn't to say that what it serves doesn't look new and modern. The Hanki Set came neatly organized in a special ceramic plate with three compartments: one for the rice (either multigrain or regular white molded into a cylinder), one for the meat, and one for an array of four vegetable panchan side dishes. It was a complete Korean meal with everything I needed and nothing I didn't. The miso pork, in particular, was wonderful—juicy, soft, cauterized to a caramel-like burnish, glazed in a marinade that's faintly tangy and alcoholic.

I might have liked the "Festival Noodles" if only the tepid anchovy-based broth was hotter and tasted less like weak tea. Instead, I slurped the big bowl of wheat noodles topped with ground beef, omelet ribbons and carrots while watching those dancing girls strut and swivel their hips. It was probably the sixth video I saw, but I could've sworn it was the same one that was playing when I arrived.

HANRI EVERYDAY KOREAN
7451 Edinger Ave., Bldg 1B, Ste 102, Huntington Beach, (714) 622-4073, hankica.com. Open Mon.-Fri., 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m. & 5-9 p.m., Sat., 11:30 a.m.-9 p.m. Hanki Sets, $10.75-$13.50; Quick Eats, $6.50-$11.50. No alcohol.

WHAT THE ALE
» ROBERT FLORES

Road Trip!

DRY RIVER BREWING
671 S. Anderson St., Los Angeles, (213) 375-5235, www.dryriverbrewing.com

Brewery collaborations often result in one-offs that are creative and delicious. And Dry River Brewing of Los Angeles and Brewjeria Co. are the most recent suds slingers to join forces to brew *desmadre*.

Led by husband-and-wife team David Hodgins and Vanda Cicenyova, Dry River brews slow beer. It cells sours and experimental botanicals that are fermented in oak barrels for long periods of time. Head brewer Naga Reshi's product is usually intense and sometimes funky, which is what you're looking for. The tasting room—built with repurposed pieces of wood and metal from the area—is nestled close to the Arts District bordering Boyle Heights, right across the street from Indie Brewing (brewery hop!).

Brewjeria Co. is a home brew outfit that's part of the SoCal Cerveceros Home Brewing Club. It's currently searching for a permanent location, possibly in Montebello or Pico Rivera, so in the interim, this collaboration is a great way to get the group's name and brewing skills out there.

Augustin Ruelas, Adrian Gonzales and Milton Ramirez of Brewjeria joined Reshi for the collaboration La Diosa Salvaje. The double passion fruit sour uses 40 pounds of passion fruit and El Dorado hops. At 7 percent ABV, it has an intense flavor with lots of depth; it's tart and enjoyably smooth.

Also offered at Dry River is Sasha, a 6.5 percent ABV, dark saison that pours deep red-violet thanks to the use of black currants. The fermenting process adds depth to this tart beer, the wood from the oak barrels gives everything character, and the yeast adds some funkiness. And Bridges IPA (6.5 percent ABV), a craft brew with a little more hop presence, is smooth from the barrels and has a nice clean finish.

A nice collage of music creates a relaxing atmosphere in which to sit back and enjoy a couple of rounds. Take a walk on the wild yeast side and make the road trip to Dry River Brewing.

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COURTESY OF URBAN PLATES

Hold the Fat

Our top places for healthy eats

BY CYNTHIA REBOLLEDO

We can't stop eating! To take away our eggnog-and-tamale-overdose guilt, we've put together a list of spots serving up healthy dishes that are actually delicious.

URBAN PLATES

Since the opening of its first eatery at the Highlands Shopping Center in Del Mar in 2011, Urban Plates has won over patrons with its commitment to organic and sustainably sourced ingredients to provide delicious scratch-made meals at an affordable price. It features a wide variety of menu options such as honey-mustard oven-baked salmon served with sesame kelp noodles and herb-grilled chicken with broccolini. For indulgence without the guilt, order the tofu vegetable curry—slow-cooked with a green curry-coconut sauce, organic carrots, daikon, zucchini, red bell peppers, organic apple and ginger, then served with mashed potatoes or white and brown rice. *26661 Aliso Creek Rd., Ste. B, Aliso Viejo, (949) 424-6160; also at 3413 E. Imperial Hwy., Brea, (714) 462-9885, 3972 Barranca Pkwy., Irvine, (949) 387-2600, and 13380 Jamboree Rd., Irvine, (714) 332-6272; www.urbanplates.com.*

SEABIRDS KITCHEN

From luxe *lonchera* to brick-and-mortar (recently expanding to Long Beach), Seabirds continues to dish out delicious seasonal-vegan fare. This is a restaurant that has managed to appeal to vegans and non-vegans alike with dishes such as its beloved beer-battered avocado tacos, creamy butternut enchiladas stuffed with black beans and maitake mushrooms in a roasted pasilla pepper sauce. If you've never been, we recommend starting with the purple taquitos—three crunchy taquitos filled with purple potatoes and topped with chipotle sour cream, fermented curtido and tangy almond feta. *2930 Bristol St., Costa Mesa, (714) 549-2584, 975 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, (562) 317-5545; www.seabirdskitchen.com.*

BLUE BOWL SUPERFOODS

Start with a base of açaí, pitaya or steel-cut oats, then work your way through vitamin-rich garnishes such as chia seeds, cacao nibs and goji berries. Top it off with some creamy almond butter, fresh fruit and agave. Try a different combination every time that's tasty, full of antioxidants and healthy AF. *417 S. Main St., Orange, (714) 876-5309; www.mybluebowl.com.*

MODEL MEALS

Get healthy meals that are organic, local, whole30 and paleo delivered to your doorstep. If you're hesitant about these buzzwords or scared you might be ordering a month's worth of cardboard-tasting food, know that its food is chef-driven, changes weekly and is tasty. A week's menu can include anything from Mediterranean lamb skewers with baba ghanoush, market vegetables and house tzatziki to wild coho salmon served with Brussels caesar salad. *201 E. Fourth St., Santa Ana, (949) 610-0869; modelmeals.com.*

GREEN TOMATO GRILL

Focused on delivering affordable, seasonal dishes, Green Tomato Grill has created a menu centered on fresh ingredients and lots of vegetables. Enjoy plates such as grilled soyrizo sweet potato hash, barbecue pulled pork melt using Creekstone Farms pork and the Thai tofu wrap (crispy tofu tossed with carrots, bell peppers, edamame and mixed greens in a coconut-peanut sauce). Stay tuned for the grand opening of its third restaurant next spring! *796 N. Brea Blvd., Brea, (714) 987-3766, 1419 N. Tustin St., Orange, (714) 532-1220; www.greentomatogrill.com.*

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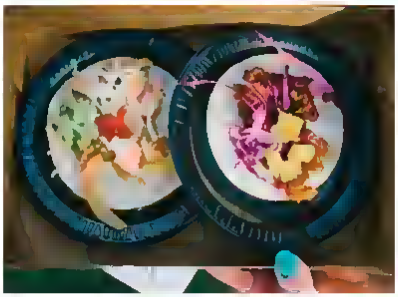

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WINE ADVOCATE
90-92 POINTS

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70% Grenache, 20% Syrah, 10% Carignan

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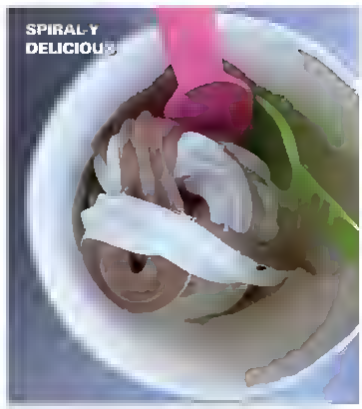
Your Own Good Place

Ice cream at Yogurtland

On NBC's afterlife comedy *The Good Place*, there's a running joke that heaven has a lot of frozen yogurt shops. At one point, their ubiquity makes Kristen Bell's character ask the architect of the Good Place, played by Ted Danson, "What is it with you and frozen yogurt? Have you not heard of ice cream?"

The answer he gives is a hilarious non sequitur, but it makes perfect sense why he designed a heaven with frozen-yogurt shops everywhere. Think of the last time you went to get frozen yogurt: You relaxed. You forgot your troubles. You let your guard down. You found your own Good Place.

That said, just like Bell's character, I've always preferred ice cream over froyo. So when Yogurtland finally started offering ice cream, I tried it. It was long overdue. It's milkier than its usual froyo, with a richness that lets you know it's going to cost you an extra half-hour on the treadmill. It is, however, just soft serve—the same kind you've been able to get anywhere that does soft serve. Revolutionary, this ain't. Regardless, it is now my favorite thing at Yogurtland.



EDWIN GOEI

And if there are frozen desserts in heaven, it won't be froyo. If you no longer need to worry about calories and cholesterol, who would pick it over ice cream?

To find your closest Yogurtland, visit wwwyogurt-land.com.

EatThisNow

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DrinkoftheWeek

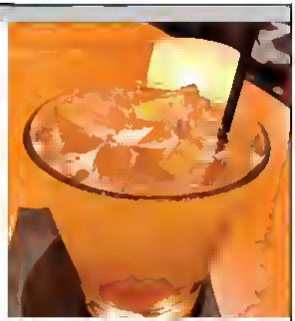
» ANNE MARIE PANORINGAN

Nolet's Have Another at Two Left Forks

Say you're a whiskey drinker. There's nothing but love for the other spirits, you simply happen to like the taste of brown over clear. But what if you end up at a gin event? With your luck, you'll find yourself sitting across from a rep for something fancy such as Nolet's. You'll admit your allegiance to whiskey, and they'll ask you kindly to be more open to gin. And that is how Nolet's Have Another winds up in front of you at Two Left Forks.

THE DRINK

Barrel-aged gin commingles with elder flower, then basil and grapefruit juice. By themselves, each flavor can hold its own. Assemble them in the same glass, and they all play well together. It helps cut through some of the richness found in dishes such as a New York strip. It's even agreeable enough that you consider a repeat performance. Score one for subliminal advertising.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Our Wanker World

Male masturbation squirmed its way into American film and television—and look at us now

BY STACY DAVIES

THE SHAPE OF WATER / FOX SEARCHLIGHT

In the long line of powerful men being brought down by credible allegations of sexual harassment, assault and rape, one of the most surprising discoveries is how many men apparently like to masturbate in front of unwilling women (even if the men ask first and don't complete the act). Masturbation as a tool of attack is not, of course, worse than rape, but it is worse than groping, and while it's shocking to no one that a lot of men like to masturbate *a lot*, it was news to many of us that this was such a popular vehicle for abuse.

Historically, male masturbation has been shamed by "proper" and religious society (even while they were all doing it, too). The fact that our current crop of powerful and wealthy abusers use masturbation as a self-shaming fetish (Louis CK) or as an egregious means to strike fear into women (Harvey Weinstein) fits with the historic notion that masturbation is dirty and bad. Except that men are no longer ashamed of masturbation. That's good, of course—lots of people masturbate, it's certainly not unhealthy from any physical standpoint (within reason), and it's basically a normal part of adulating for men *and* women. But masturbation *pride* is a newer thing, and film and television are behind the surge.

Prior to writer Cameron Crowe's 1982 film *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, in which a masturbation-shaming scene famously proved endearing to men and boys who were done feeling the sting of guilt, American male film characters rarely talked about masturbation or did it on screen. During the 1970s, the maverick decade of cinematic male archetypes and filmmaking, masturbating was the lonely refuge of the unwanted, the loser, the socially awkward. It was a teenager's problem that he'd overcome once he grew up and learned how to properly court a woman for sex or a relationship. The most popular male action stars of the time—Burt Reynolds, Clint Eastwood, Charles Bronson—would *never* have masturbated, let alone talked about it.

By the 1990s, male masturbation as a comedy device began to appear in mainstream films. While it was still often depicted as awkward and humiliating (*There's Something About Mary*, *American Pie*, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*), seeing so much masturbating must have been liberating for men. That's also okay—film is allowed to reveal the dark, gritty underbelly of humanity, as well as create visibility for people or actions that may or may not be misjudged by society. Fairly quickly, however, masturbation moved from comedy device to a sign of male power, and instead of being seen as the desperate act of the frustrated, pulling one off several times a day was now a sign of male virility—thanks, in large part, to porn.

Porn has risen to such an acceptable level that groundbreaking films such as writer/director Joseph Gordon-Levitt's critically acclaimed 2013 film *Don Jon*, which addressed the overuse of porn and masturbating, were misinterpreted by many men. Madeleine Davies, senior writer at Jezebel, gave a disturbing firsthand account of viewing the film with the masses, the highlights of which were men cheering the objectification of women and grumbling when the film's actual message was revealed. Other reports and exit polling told the same story—many men saw Jon as a hero. But Jon is all screwed up. He watches *way* too much porn and masturbates *way* too much to it—to the point that he eventually can't even be satisfied by his smoking-hot girlfriend (played by Scarlett Johansson).

On the other hand, films depicting female masturbation are rare. When writer/director Jamie Babbit's *But I'm a Cheerleader* included an act of female masturbation in its original cut, the film received an NC-17 rating. *American Pie*, also released in 1999, received an R for similar fare. *Not Another Teen Movie* contains a rare instance of female masturbation humiliation used for comedic effect, but more often, female masturbation is presented as erotic, serious—or seriously screwed up.

Writer/director Jennifer Kent's 2014 horror flick *The Babadook* includes a scene in which a lonely single mother tries to vibrate her broken heart away. Essie Davis' life is a nightmare, with her excitable son seeing demons, the two of them cooped up together all day long, and her missing her dead husband—and a good climax is what she *deserves* as she attempts to sort the flurry of paranormal shenanigans that have taken over her life. Her son intrudes at just the wrong moment, as kids always do, and the scene is neither erotic nor a slam on female desire, instead invoking our sympathy.

Guillermo del Toro's *The Shape of Water*, co-written with Vanessa Taylor, includes two harmless scenes of female masturbation because they're a set-up for the fishy love story—and it's a rare instance of a male writer (with female help) steering clear of male-gaze erotica or female derangement.

The innocuous art of pulling one off certainly branched into abuse in Quentin Tarantino's 1992 film *The Bad Lieutenant*, as a demented street cop played by Harvey Keitel masturbates in front of two teenage girls he's erroneously pulled over. It's a harrowing, sickly scene of assault.

In a film that's near impossible to get through these days, 1999's *American Beauty* offered dads lusting after their teenage daughters' friends the soft hand of sympathy, if not straight up approval, and justifies Lester's (Kevin Spacey) statutory rape fantasies by making the girl appear loose. She finds his ogling "cute" (really?), and when he masturbates to thoughts of her while in bed next to his sleeping wife, who awakens and calls him out on it, it is *the wife* who is presented as unreasonable. The film won Best Picture the following year.

Male masturbation as a weapon takes on a much more malignant tone in Tig Notaro's look at workplace masturbation harassment. In the second season of her Amazon series *One Mississippi*, written by women, a male radio-station boss masturbates under his desk in front of his female employee, and the scene makes no mistake in its presentation of the act as a potential weapon of abuse. We also now know that Notaro based this vignette, in part, on her former friend, Louis CK.

So, film and television have freed male masturbation from the hairy-palmed shackles of its past, but how much of this liberation is responsible for the onslaught of abusers currently falling on their swords? We know that abuse is about power, not sex, and that abusive men have been whipping out their dicks for centuries. We also know that masturbating doesn't automatically make men perverts. But the line separating the two has been erased and the context lost—as evidenced by so many men feeling perplexed that a woman could be traumatized by an experience of unsolicited masturbation.

It's clear that as a creative industry, and as the audience who continues to buy tickets and integrate the media arts into our lives, we've changed. Freedom of expression is essential, but when we tell ourselves there are no rules, that we can say, wear and do whatever we like, everything becomes fair game. That includes talking about sex and talking about, as well as showing, masturbation. The problem is, women and children—in Hollywood, in the Capitol, in Alabama, in diners, and on migrant-worker farms—aren't being attacked with sloppy or outrageous fashion or a particular brand of salty humor. They're actually being attacked by masturbating dicks.

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Hamilton, Hendrix, Elvis and the Khmer Rouge

And almost eight more reasons to look forward to local theater in 2018

BY JOEL BEERS

If you add the numbers in the year 2018, you get 11, which means, as all the savvy kids know, that 11 is the magic number of this new year. Bet it all on 11! Buy 11 Hot Pockets for the price of 10! Vote Nov. 6 against your local Republican congressman 11 times!

And here are 11* reasons to give a shit about local theater in the first half of year 11, uh, 2018!

Elvis '68. It's a year of revivals at Fullerton's Maverick Theater, and this one should be its biggest. This theatrical retelling of Presley's 1968 TV comeback filled the house back in 2014, and considering Elvis is right up there with death and taxes in things that can't be avoided, it ought to pack them in again. *Maverick Theater, 110 E. Walnut Ave., Fullerton, (714) 526-7070, www.mavericktheater.com. Jan. 12-Feb. 25*

The Car Plays. This is a site-specific piece staged as part of the Segerstrom Center's always-intriguing Off Center Festival. Audience members see five 10-minute plays, but here's the catch. They sit in cars, and most of the action also takes place inside the vehicle or right outside of it. *Segerstrom Center for the Performing Arts, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 556-2787, www.scfta.org. Jan. 19-28*

The Hendrix Project. Also part of the Off Center Festival, this show is set on the last New Year's Eve of the 1960s, which was also the last of Jimi Hendrix's life. Twelve of the musician's "disciples" have come to bear witness to the man and his Band of Gypsys during a concert at NYC's Fillmore East Auditorium. It's conceived and directed by Roger Guenveur Smith, who is as brilliant as they come, and developed in cooperation with Experience Hendrix LLC, which owns Hendrix's publicity rights. *Segerstrom Center for the Performing Arts, www.scfta.org. Feb. 1-3*

Cambodian Rock Band. Set in both present-day America and in the darkest days of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, this Lauren Yee/Dengue Fever piece is "part comedy, part mystery, part rock concert." It's also a world premiere and ranks among the most unusual new plays mounted by SCR. *South Coast Repertory, 655 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 708-5555, www.scr.org. March 4-25.*

The Crucible. Always timely, Arthur Miller's 1953 play juxtaposing the Salem Witch Trials against the rabid McCarthyism of the late 1940s seems even more relevant in Trump America 2018. *Attic Community Theater, 2834 S. Fairmont Ave., Costa Mesa, (714) 662-2525, www.atictheaterweebly.com. March 16-April 8.*

NICOLAS SAVIGNANO

Shrew! Amy Freed is one of the finest writers to grace South Coast Repertory's boards over the past 20 years, and this play couldn't seem any timelier. Once again re-imagining history, Freed turns the tables on Shakespeare's oft-produced, oft-pilloried *The Taming of the Shrew* (you know, the one in which the woman gets physically and mentally abused by a man and LOVES it?) by having it written by a 16th-century woman. *South Coast Repertory, www.scr.org. March 24-April 21.*

Good People. David Lindsay-Abaire is one of this country's top playwrights, and the Chance staged an impeccable production of his *Rabbit Hole* several years ago, so there's little reason to think this one won't be as good. It's a story about a struggling single mother forced to turn to an old flame, now wealthy physician, for help. *Chance Theater, chancetheater.com. April 20-May 20.*

Urinetown. Plenty of intriguing things are on tap at STAGES this year, ranging from a "new" play by William Shakespeare to the return of unscripted long-form improv based on Tennessee Williams characters. But the two times this Mark Hollmann-Greg Kotis anti-musical set in a bizarre city in which you gotta pay to pee have been staged by local theaters (Costa Mesa Civic Playhouse, the Maverick), the results have been hilarious. *STAGES-theatre, 400 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 525-4484, www.stagesoc.org. April 20-May 20.*

Hamilton. Yes, it's finally here. This is the national touring production of a show that is still running on Broadway, as well as Chicago and Los Angeles. What does that mean? Well, you're probably not going to see any of the same people who shamed Vice President Mike Pence, at least in the major roles, but you're going to see the same play and hear the same music that made this the Biggest Theatrical Thing of this century. *Segerstrom Center for the Performing Arts, www.scfta.org. May 8-27.*

Big Fish. This is a musical adaptation of the 1998 Daniel Wallace novel and 2003 Tim Burton film about a man on his deathbed whose son embarks on an imaginative journey to figure out fact from fantasy in his father's stories. *Chance Theater, 5522 E. La Palma Ave., Anaheim, (888) 455-4212, chancetheater.com. June 29-July 29.*

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**Sure, that's only 10, not 11. You really think we believe in superstitious claptrap?!*

TrendZilla
» AIMEE MURILLO

Love Your Skin

"*Bono Spera* means 'good hope' in Latin," explains Sonia Kim, owner of Bono Spera, a beauty and lifestyle boutique. "I really enjoy sharing my thoughts on how I can help my customers do just that."

Last year K-beauty reached peak visibility in the States with e-commerce sites such as Gumm collaborations between Holika Holika and Sanrio, and CVS's own Korean-specific section all launching the same year. Kim's store opened in August at the OC Mix with products for women that target wrinkles, pores, acne, dark circles and dry skin, as well as makeup and hair care. There's also cutesy undergarments and athleisure and street wear to entice the most chic fashionista.

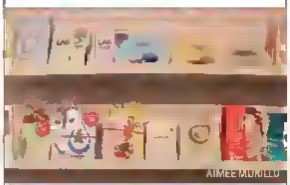
Kim, who hand picks all the products in the store, has been an avid user of K-beauty since her own family trips to Seoul in the early 2000s. "And I haven't gone a day since then without incorporating Korean skincare products in some capacity in my daily regimen," she says. Bono Spera is a one-stop shop meant to help women to look and feel their best, with exquisite products at the ready for a reasonable price.

With their use of natural ingredients and proven benefits, K-beauty formulas are not only here to stay, but have also been imitated and copied by other global skincare companies. According to Kim, the appearance of these luxurious brands in the U.S. mainstream is thanks to social media interaction. "Borders are being crossed and boundaries broken simply by viewing someone trying a Korean sheet mask on Instagram," Kim says.

There's no one better to guide you through the world of K-beauty than Kim, who knows what each product is meant for and how to best treat your epidermis. While her shop is small, there's so much variety on its shelves that you're sure to find some "good hope"!

AMURILLO@OCWEEKLY.COM

BONO SPERA
3313 Hyland Ave., Ste. C5 and C12, Costa Mesa. Instagram: @bonospera.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COURTESY OF BE LIKE MAX

Horn-ets Nest

Ska band's apology for anti-gay comments stirs controversy

BY BRITTANY WOOLSEY

Three years ago, fans and members of a Las Vegas ska band posted comments on social media ridiculing a Long Beach man for his beliefs and homosexuality. Now, the band say they regret their past actions and are holding a show benefiting gay-pride groups, but their victim isn't letting them go quietly.

Andy George, the owner of Toxic Toast Records in Long Beach, posted on Be Like Max's Facebook page in July 2014, asking the band to stop referring to women as bitches and sluts in lyrics, as he heard them do at a show.

According to screenshots of the post, Be Like Max replied, "Fuck you, slut." Singer Charley Fine created and posted a meme with George's photo and the words, "Excuse me, bitch, can I help you?"

Fans added to the thread, posting comments such as "I think this kid is just mad 'cause he's gay" and creating homophobic memes with George's image.

While no member of the band directly used any slurs, according to screenshots from the Facebook thread, George says that because Be Like Max did not censor or delete the comments making fun of him, it showed they "stood behind the statement."

"[Fine] was the first to call me a 'shit bitch,' which is still homophobic shit to say to a gay male," George says. "Calling a gay male a bitch is an emasculating thing to do. I mean, think about what's being implied when someone tells a man to 'quit being a bitch.'"

George feels that bands and promoters—including Overeasy Booking, which works with such bands as MXPX and Screeching Weasel and was handling that Be Like Max tour—disregarded his concerns and blamed him for how the situation escalated. "It's making my strong thought of 'it's not about me' even stronger," he says. "It goes so much deeper than just the band. Other bands and promoters defended them and protected them from any repercussions. In the end, it made me scared for all women and LGBT individuals in the scene because I realized any victims will face the same treatment and same defense of their attackers by the scene. It scared the crap out of me."

In a statement sent to the *Weekly*, Fine said he thought George's initial post was intended to be humorous. "It quickly became apparent that he was not joking, and instead of acting like a mature adult, I took the low road and bullied him," Fine wrote. "It got to a point where friends of mine used homophobic language knowing this gentleman was gay, and I did nothing to stop it. Things got out of hand, and a few days later, I attempted to apologize directly to this man, though in my juvenile way of thinking, I did more to shirk responsibility in the apology than to actually own up to my actions."

In a Facebook message, George told Fine his intentions were to "speak up and try to influence positive changes," but the two were not able to agree on a time to meet regarding the issue. According to screenshots from the conversation, follow-up messages from Fine to George sent in July 2014, January 2016 and November 2017 went unanswered. "Honestly, with the number of non-apologies I have gotten from them, I have no desire to talk to Charley or anyone from the band," George says. "Yeah, it makes me look like a bad guy to not forgive them when they are reaching out, but they faced nothing negative at all. ... It's a lot fairer to me to forgive them after people see what they actually did and how many non-apologies they gave."

Now, with Be Like Max putting together a Ska Against Homophobia concert in Las Vegas on Jan. 11, George finds the move insincere. George and others have posted comments on Be Like Max's Facebook and events pages, letting people know about the 2014 incident, though George says the comments are being censored and removed.

Screenshots show Fine made further unsuccessful attempts to reach George to discuss the situation. The singer says he wanted to put on the Ska Against Homophobia show as a way to "grow and learn" from his mistakes.

"I've realized that, while I've never been homophobic, what I was a part of was homophobic behavior, and I'm beyond ashamed that it happened, and I want to do everything in my power to help people," Fine said in his statement. "I've spent four years reflecting on this and how I can be a better person going forward, including reaching out to friends in the local LGBTQ community for guidance."

The group will play at the Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen on Jan. 16, no word whether George will speak out against that show, too.

Fine says he accepts he will never be forgiven by George, but he hopes others can learn from his mistakes.

"Words do hurt," he says. "I believe in fighting hate with love and sincerely hope that the gentleman I hurt is able to get closure. I hope he realizes that I am truly sorry about initiating the bullying against him. And to the community I've disrespected and the people, in general, I've embarrassed and let down, I'm sorry."

BE LIKE MAX
perform with Matemoska and Absurd Tones at Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 871-7469; www.slidebarfullerton.com. Jan. 16, 6 p.m. Free. 21+.

COURTESY OF JEANETTE TOMAS

Dance Party

The Slop Stomp is the vinyl pulse of LBC's rock & roll scene

BY NATE JACKSON

Plenty of oddball creatures are known to emerge from the black lagoon of Long Beach's rock & roll scene. There's no shortage of bands, record labels or denim-clad miscreants, and for the past 24 months, one of the few consistent elements in the scene has percolated behind the decks at Slop Stomp, a resident DJ night at Alex's Bar that offers the best in classic and obscure rock revelry. Spinning tunes from punk heroes such as the Ramones and the underrated (and aptly named) Undertones, Slop Stomp DJs combine all of their favorite influences in one big bubbling cauldron of aural supremacy.

That was one of the few things that Slop Stomp founders Jeanette Tomas (a.k.a. DJ Polyester), her husband, Kendall McDiarmid (a.k.a. Master Droog), and Sam Velazquez (a.k.a. Telegram Sam) hoped they'd get right when they started the event in 2016. Not only have they brought a quality rock & roll DJ night to Long Beach, but they've also done it consistently—and without a cover charge. "When we first started, there weren't any solid rock & roll nights in Long Beach," Tomas says. "Sam came from Cretin Hop (based in LA), and my husband and I used to do the Project Wednesdays at Proof Bar in Santa Ana, which were both kind of similar."

But joining forces to put on a night in Long Beach's blood-red underbelly turned out to be a bright idea. It eventually grew by incorporating live bands such as the Thingz, the Stitches and Telephone Lovers. And Slop Stomp recently celebrated its second anniversary with a raucous night featuring a live set by garage-rock revivalists the Night Times and, of course, its founders taking over the decks.

Though the Slop Stomp thrives on the loud selections of the DJs and bands, McDiarmid's artwork is just as vital as the music. Staring through a prism of low-brow masters such as R. Crumb and Ed "Big Daddy" Roth, every poster celebrates old-school sci-fi and grotesque creatures that could be the direct descendants of Rat Fink. "I put extra time into it to make sure it looks good and it's kinda branded so when people look at it, they know it's Slop Stomp, and when they see the fliers on the wall, they're gonna want to rip it off the wall and take it home and put it on *their* wall," says McDiarmid.

Though the first two years seemed to fly by, Tomas and the Slop Stomp DJs look forward to continuing their evolution as the harvesters of LBC's nocturnal rock & roll creatures, bringing in more elements and getting more people involved. Tomas says they'll be incorporating more local vendors and artists since a big part of Slop Stomp's appeal comes from the artist community who see the music they play as a sonic inspiration for their work.

"There's a lot of DJ nights," Tomas says, "but this one has a lot of interest surrounding the art, so we wanna make more of a community vibe."

NJACKSON@OCWEEKLY.COM

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FAT WRECK CHORDS

Fat Wreck Chord's New Fam

Late July 2017. The Last Gang are sitting in traffic on the 405 freeway just shy of Sepulveda, on their way to board their first international flight as a band. Vocalist/guitarist Brenne Red's phone flashes an unknown number. On the line is Erin Burkett from Bay Area punk label Fat Wreck Chords. "She said, 'We wanna put out your record, welcome to the family!'" Red recalls.

Naturally, the trio lost their shit.

While getting dropped off curbside at LAX and juggling passports, sticker-slapped guitar cases and luggage, the band continued their life-changing conversation. Suddenly booking Rebellion Festival and a small UK tour on their own seemed like the first step to something larger than they imagined for their self-funded full-length, *Salvation for Wolves*.

Just a year before, the band were spending their days and nights with engineer Cameron Webb at Maple Studios in Santa Ana. They saved up and even took out loans to create an album that captured their punk roots with a polished and poetic trajectory they knew they could achieve with the right tools. Webb pushed the Last Gang beyond their limits, Red says, jokingly adding that she often felt like a physicist of music during the process. After completing the record, they sent it to everyone they could.

"The crazy part of it is [Fat Wreck Chords] has never seen us live, they just heard this album," Red says. "It sounds like a story where we got lucky, but we've worked hard."

The Last Gang have spent more than a decade in the local scene, packing dingy and DIY spots all over Southern California piecing together tours with locals and legends alike. So to hear words of validation from a label that each band member has long admired made an impact. "Every once in a while, you need a stranger to tell you [they're] inspired by what you do," Red says. "We fucking needed that. Fat believing in our music breathes new life into us."

Backed by their new label, the Last Gang are now setting up tours in the U.S. and the UK to promote *Salvation for Wolves*, which Fat Wreck Chords will release in early 2018.

The lyrics were inspired by such strong writers as Joe Strummer, Elvis Costello and Laura Jane Grace, all of whom moved Red to write tunes that thoughtfully break away from the typical punk formula. She says she loves punk rock because of the way it helped her craft a critical mind as a teen and for providing not only a place to say "fuck you," but also an intellectual and musical space to sharpen her creative axe.

"I don't know what it is about the human condition that wants it to express itself," she says. "Art and culture is what makes humans great; it's our saving grace. I don't know what I would do with my life if I didn't play music.

"I'm a very positive nihilist," Red continues. "I'm the happiest dystopian person in the world. The world is such a huge wheel, and we are just small cogs. I don't know if anything is going to change. But if you don't try, you never know. So even though I don't have hope, I still do, too. That's why I keep trying. That's why I keep writing music. I never thought I could do as much with music as I have, but here I am living my dream. I'd rather die being unsuccessful than die never trying."

LocalsOnly
» NATE JACKSON

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Runners

I married my high-school sweetheart at 17, had a baby, stayed together a few years, then mental illness and subsequent infidelity led to things ending. My ex-husband remarried, divorced again and is now in another LTR. I'm in a LTR for a decade with my current partner (CP), we have a few kids, and I'm so in love with him it terrifies me. My ex frequently makes sexual remarks to me, low-key flirts. I feel an animal attraction in the moment. Whatever. I don't want to be with him; my relationship with CP is solid AF, and I get amazing fucking at home from a man far more skilled. CP knows about ex-husband's remarks and one actual physical advance. CP has offered to talk to my ex. I told him nah, I'll deal with it and make it stop. I talked to my ex-husband today, and he said, "I'm sorry; it's just teasing. I won't make an actual move ever again, but you're the only woman I ever just look at and get immediately hard for, and it's only a few more years before our kid is fully grown and we don't see each other anymore. So humor me because you know we both enjoy it." And it's true that I do enjoy it. But how harmful is it to engage in flirty banter without any touching, nudity or worse? I hate having secrets, as I feel they are barriers to intimacy, but I'm a thirty-something mom and it is so fucking unbelievably sexy to be made to feel so desirable even after all that shit between us, and it'll never ever happen because hell no am I sleeping with my ex-hubby, but knowing this man will never get a whiff of my pussy again but can't help but beg for it with his eyes gives me a sense of power like I've never fucking felt before, but even so I don't want to be a terrible person for hiding this from my CP because I don't like having secrets from him but this is just one that turns me on to no end but I should nip this in the bud and put a stop to it yesterday because it's wrong, right?
Secret Longings Utterly Titillating

I love a good run-on sentence—grammar fetishists are going to get off on diagramming that doozy you closed with—so I'm going to give it a shot, too: I don't see the harm in enjoying your ex-husband's flirtations so long as you're certain you'll never, ever take him up on his standing offer, but you are playing with fire here, SLUT, so pull on a pair of asbestos panties when you know you'll be seeing your ex-hubby, and I don't think you should feel bad about this secret because while honesty is great *generally* and while the keeping of secrets is frowned upon by advice professionals *reflexively*, SLUT, a little mystery, a little distance, a little erotic autonomy keeps our sex lives with long-term partners hot—even monogamous relationships—so instead of seeing this secret as a barrier to intimacy, SLUT, remind yourself that the erotic charge you get from your ex-hubby and the way he makes you feel desirable—benefits your CP because he's the one who will be getting a big, fat whiff of your pussy when you get home and there's nothing wrong with that, right?

I've been with my girlfriend "J" for two years. Her best friend "M" is a guy man she's known since high school. M and I have hung out many times. He seems cool, but lately I've been wondering if he and J are fucking behind my back. For starters, J and I rarely have sex anymore. Even a kiss on the cheek happens less than once a week. Meanwhile, J's Facebook feed has pictures of M grabbing her tits outside of a gay club in front of her sister. She told me he's spent the night in her room, even though he lives only a few miles away. I've also recently found out that although M has a strong preference for men, he considers himself bisexual. I understand that everyone loves tits, even if they're not turned on by them, and gay men can sleep with a girl and actually just ... sleep. I also know that her antidepressants can kill sex drive. All three things at once feel like more than just coincidence, though. At the very least, the PDAs seem disrespectful. At worst, I'm a blind fool who's been replaced. Am I insecure, or is there something to these worries?
You Pick The Acronym I Gotta Get To Work

Your girlfriend's best friend isn't gay, YPTAIGGTW, he's bisexual—so, yeah, it's entirely possible M is fucking your girlfriend, since fucking girls is something bisexual guys do, and according to one study, they're better at it. (Australian women who had been with both bi and straight guys ranked their bi female partners as more attentive lovers, more emotionally available and better dads, according to the results of a study published in 2016.) But while we can't know for sure whether M is fucking J, YPTAIGGTW, we do know who she isn't fucking: *you*. If the sex is rare and a kiss—on the cheek—is a once-a-week occurrence, it's time to pull the plug. Yes, antidepressants can be a libido killer. They can also be a dodge. If your girlfriend doesn't regard the lack of sex as a problem and isn't working on a fix—if she's prioritizing partying with her bisexual bestie over talking to her doc and adjusting her meds, if she hasn't offered you some sort of accommodation/outlet/work-around for the lack of sex—trust your gut and get out.

I'm a recently divorced woman with a high libido. Now that I'm single, I've come out as a kinkster. I quickly met someone who swept me off my feet—smart, funny, sexy, proudly pervy and experienced in the BDSM scene—and soon he declared himself to my Dom and I assumed the sub role. This was hot as hell at first. I loved taking his orders, knowing how much my subservience pleased him, and surprising myself with just how much pain and humiliation I could take. However, his fantasies quickly took a darker turn. When I say I'm uncomfortable with the extremely transgressive territory he wants to explore, he says, "I'm your master, and you take my orders." I think this is shitty form—the bottom should always set the limits. When we're in play, he says that I chose him as my top precisely because I wanted to see how far I could go and that it's his job to push me out of my comfort zone. I think he's twisting my words. Arguing over limits mid-scene makes me both frustrated and angry. I'm not in any physical danger, but his requests (demands) could ruin some of my existing relationships. Did I blow it by not giving him a list of my hard limits in advance of becoming his sub? Or is he just a shitty, inconsiderate top trying to take advantage of a novice? After play, he checks in to see if I'm okay, which on the surface looks like great form—aftercare and all—but also feels manipulative. How can I pull things back to where I'm comfortable? Do I run from the scene—or just this guy?
Tired Of Overreaching From A Shitty Top

A top who reopens negotiations about limits and what's on the BDSM menu during a scene—a time when the sub will feel tremendous pressure to, well, submit—is not a top you can trust. The same goes for a top who makes demands that, if obeyed, could ruin their sub's relationships with family, friends, other partners, etc. Run from this guy, TOOFAST, but not from the scene. There are better tops out there. Go find one.

SavageLove
» DAN SAVAGE

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Toke of the Week

» ROBERT FLORES

Green Herojuana

An indica-dominant hybrid of two very potent parents, Petrolia Head Stash and Killer New Haven, Green Herojuana helps with insomnia and pain. The buds are small, dense and full of small orange hairs that are tight and compact. At the price of $35 for an eighth, it's not considered a top-shelf strain, but its effects are as dank as any top-shelf strain I have smoked.

After crushing a small bud with my fingers, I put the small green pieces in a pipe and took a small hit: very smooth, a strong taste of pine with a slightly skunky aroma. Right away, I felt a buzz. A few small hits later, and my face is flushed and I'm feeling quite numb, which is a good thing. I am very impressed with the Herojuana. It worked almost immediately for my back pain and definitely helps with insomnia. If I were to take bigger tokes and smoke a couple of more bowls, I'd be sleeping like a baby. But with smaller hits, I can better monitor how the Herojuana dealt with my pain. As a cancer survivor, I can say that if I were going through chemo right now, I would use Herojuana 24/7. #Fuckcancer!

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ROBERT FLORES

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Employment

195 Position Wanted

ADATA Technology (USA) Co. Ltd. seeks Product Marketing Analyst. Mstrs in Bus. Admin. Mktg, Communication or IT req'd. 12 mth. exp. in any job title involv. product analysis of computer peripheral devices. Collaborate w/HQ re product design. Work site: Brea, CA. Mail resumes to: 990 Columbia St. Brea, CA 92821

Market Research Analyst: Apply by mail to JS Alliance Corp., 560 Porter Way, Placentia, CA 92870. attn. President.

Siya Inc. d/b/a Sona Enterprises seeks Computer Programmer Ana in CS (req'd: 6 mth exp. in any job title involving working w/comp. algorithms incl. Automate bus. processes, update comp. programs, fix errors. Work site: Santa Fe Springs, CA. Mail resumes to Sona Portal 10255 Palm Dr. Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670.

Lower Elementary Head Teacher. Teach lower elem students using Montessori methods. BA in Ed., English or Intl. Aff. diploma. 40hrs/wk. Apply to: Upton Schools HR, 1 Tech Dr., Bldg H, Irvine, CA 92618

Graphic Designer. Design mktg & ad materials for co. Req'd: MA in Graphic Design Design or Visual Comm. Design. Mail resume: Ho Jung Kim DDS Inc., 444 N Harbor Blvd #240 Fullerton, CA 92832

Infinity Sales Inc. Tustin, CA, seeks a FAE (Field Application Engineer) to provide field technical electrical engineering support for complex semiconductor tech nologies to customers & internal sales engineering teams. M.S.E.E. or related required. Domestic travel required up to 25% of the time. Send resumes to Robert Floumoy 20929 Ventura Blvd. Ste. 47455 Woodland Hills, CA 91364

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Engineer II (Injection Molding & Plastics) sought by Applied Medical Resources Corporation a medical device dvlpr & manufacturer (Research/ emergent/implmntn tech nologies for injection molding/plastics). Rach s deg in Plastics Engr, Materials Engr, Mech Engr, Mfr Engr or rel Field w/ 1 yr exp. Job loc: Lake Forest, CA. E-mail resume to CHU@APPLIEDMEDICAL.COM

Quest Diagnostics in San Juan Capistrano, CA, seeks Clinical Laboratory Scientists to test, analyze, & report. Req's: Rach degree or for equiv in Med Tech Chem Bio or rel Field. CA State Clinical Laboratory Scientist license or license-eligible. All shifts. Resume to: Jerry.F.Sutton@questdiagnostics.com. Job Code: "CLS"

Employment

195 Position Wanted

CLINICAL PHARMACOVIGILANCE DATA MANAGER sought by Integrium, LLC in Tustin, CA. Monitor the ongoing collection of clinical data informing the Drug Development Team of any drug safety issues arising during and after conducting Clinical Drug Trial. Send resume to: Debbie Mason Integrium, LLC, 14351 Myford Rd., Suite A, Tustin, CA 92780

Accounting Clerk. Compute, classify, record accounting data into ledger. Req'd: Bachelor's in Bus. Admin. Accounting or related. Mail Resume: Core Pro Advisor, 6291 Beach Blvd., Suite 305, Buena Park, CA 90621

CH2M Hill, Inc. Geotechnical Engineer. Santa Ana, CA. Geotechnical Engineer to include planning & site characterization, design, & construction inspection. Mail resume to: Shelly Saitta, CH2M HILL, 9191 S. Jamaica St., Englewood, CO 80112. Job ID: 17-CA2102

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Employment

195 Position Wanted

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Computer Systems Engineer (Tustin, CA) Design and develop operational support systems for computer systems. Bachelor's in Computer/Software Engineering related. Resume to: Woongjin Inc. 355 Centennial Way #200 Tustin, CA 92780

Employment

195 Position Wanted

Senior SAP Solution Developer sought by Applied Medical Resources Corporation, a medical device dvlpr & mfr. (dsgn/dvlp/ responsible for full life cycle implmtn of Web Dynpro/ABAP). Rach s deg in Comp Sci, Mgmt Info Systems or related IT field or related w/ 5 yrs exp. Job loc: Rancho Santa Margarita, CA. E-mail resume to SAPCAREER@appliedmedical.com.

System Integration Analyst (Tustin, CA) Develop, create, and modify computer software for efficient system integration and operation. Master's in Info System/Engineering related. Resume to: Woongjin Inc. 355 Centennial Way #200 Tustin, CA 92780

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Sharing Greens

Doug Benson and Ngaio Bealum make it rain flower in Irvine

BY MARY CARREON

What do you get when you combine weed and **LEGO Batman**?

There are many potential answers to that question, but for the purposes of this column, the correct answer is **Doug Benson**. A cannabis advocate, film junky and standup comedian, Benson's snarky humor and quick wit make you laugh the way you would with your best friend. You might *think* you don't know him, but if you've ever watched ***Trailer Park Boys***, ***The Sarah Silverman Program***, ***Friends***, ***How I Met Your Mother***, ***Curb Your Enthusiasm*** or, obviously, ***The LEGO Batman Movie***, then you've seen his work.

Over Christmas weekend, I watched an episode of ***Bob's Burgers*** in which Bob fires his three kids who work in his restaurant because he fears he might ruin their lives by keeping them from truly experiencing their childhood. They end up meeting an old hippie couple who have not only a blueberry farm, but also a marijuana grow operation. The kids end up working for the couple and unwittingly delivering weed disguised in blueberry packages to people all over the city.

Turns out Benson is actually the voice of the DEA agent who comes in at the end of the episode with his team of enforcement officers to bust the hippies. The irony of the character is found in Benson's being a stoner. The show also made me realize he's somewhat of a comedy ninja. He sneakily appears in your favorite shows or movies and makes you cackle without even knowing it's him.

When I heard Benson was performing at the **Irvine Improv** on Dec. 28, there was no way I was missing it. I mean, what else is there to do in OC midweek? Benson was easily the best option for entertainment across the county.

The crowd inside the venue was impressively large for a weekday evening at the **Irvine Spectrum**. Waitresses bustled through the tightly sectioned tables as if tight-rope performers, dropping off bites and drinks. A blonde with mischievous blue eyes sat at one of the tables directly in front of the stage. She locked eyes with her friend who sat adjacent to her. The friend rifled through her bag, checking over her shoulders every few seconds. She then covertly passed a small silver flask to the blonde, who unscrewed the top and added a couple of hefty splashes to her dark, carbonated drink.

Onstage, Benson looked as if he could be the love-child of **Tom Robbins** and **Charles Bukowski**. "I love it when current politicians talk about the Founding Fathers," he told the crowd. "But those guys were racist pieces of shit, right?"

One person sitting next to me cheered in agreement. But it seemed as if the rest of **Irvine** had no comment on such a statement. Performing standup comedy in OC must be painfully difficult, given today's political climate and how blindly conservative the majority of those behind the Orange Curtain are. "All right, you guys don't want to talk about this," Benson replied to the audience's lack of response. "I get it. I understand."

He then reached into a bag and started handing out random gifts to people, mostly one-hitter pipes. He reminisced about the time he got caught smoking weed in Columbus, Ohio, on top of a parking structure with a group of fans after his show. He not only received a $100 fine and had to make a court appearance, but he was also banned from the mall for three months. But getting kicked out wasn't an option, considering he had to perform there a few more nights. He showed up the next night to perform, got onstage and wondered the entire time if he would be tackled and arrested. (He wasn't.)

Performing with Benson was **Ngaio Bealum**, a tall man with salt-and-pepper hair. A cannabis advocate and activist who travels for expos and events such as the **International Cannabis Business Conference** in **San Francisco**, **Seattle Hemp Fest**, **Hemp Con**, **Kush Con** and many others, Bealum's herb-forward humor hits with elegance—unlike the **Cheech-and-Chong**-style approach to comedy that's focused on getting fucked-up and being a sluggish stoner. Rather, he made references to his dreads being an international sign to people who are either trying to buy from or sell weed to him.

Bealum incorporates info on the new regulations in his act, including the fact that if you're at least 21 years old, you're legally able to give away up to 1 ounce of flower to another person who's 21 or older. (After the show, he gave me a delightful, fruit-smelling nug that I'd guess is an indica hybrid.) He also shed light on the fact that one of the biggest challenges in America is being healthy because "we are the pioneers—we stay on the cutting edge of designing new and ever-delicious ways to eat like shit. … You like **Doritos** *and* you like tacos? Here: Have a Dorito taco!"

COURTESY OF LEVITY ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

After the show, Benson, Bealum and a group of 15 adoring fans met on the outskirts of the Spectrum. There were three pipes going around at once, with everyone donating herb to the bowls. One fan named **Steve** drove all the way from Murrieta to San Diego to see Benson and Bealum perform the previous night, drove to Irvine to see them perform that night, and was going again the next night. Now that is dedication.

"Orange County has changed a lot," Bealum told the group. "Ten years ago, they'd arrest you for even *thinking* about smoking weed."

Benson explained that he never knows how shows in places such as Irvine are going to go because it's impossible to guess who'll be in the crowd. Like clockwork, a young OC-bro type and his girlfriend approached Benson and Bealum to shake their hands. "I've never done drugs before or smoked anything," he said. "We just decided to wing it and go to comedy tonight not really knowing what to expect, and we were blown away by the weed jokes." Next to him, his girlfriend giggled, she looked as if she actually could have been stoned.

The comedians looked at each other with a smirk. "I hope you get laid tonight!" one of them yelled as the couple exited.

As the night came to an end, Benson asked me if I'd heard about what was going on at ***LA Weekly***. I explained to him that ***OC Register*** losers and a shady weed lawyer had taken over the paper, laying off the majority of their editorial staff. "To push their conservative agenda? Everyone has an agenda," he said.

"Yes, that's essentially what's going on."

Benson and Bealum were equally pissed off about the situation. May the boycott continue.

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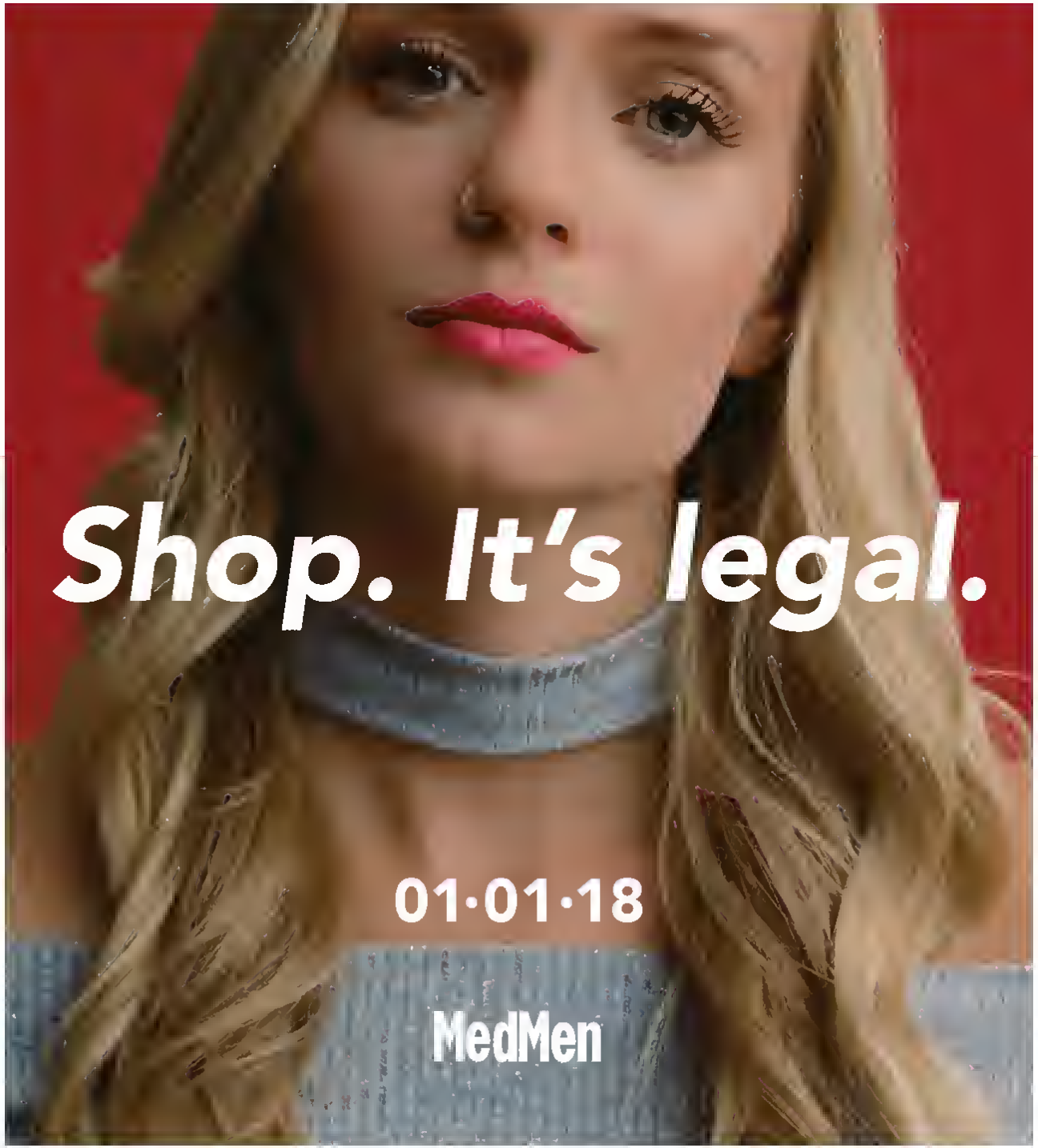
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